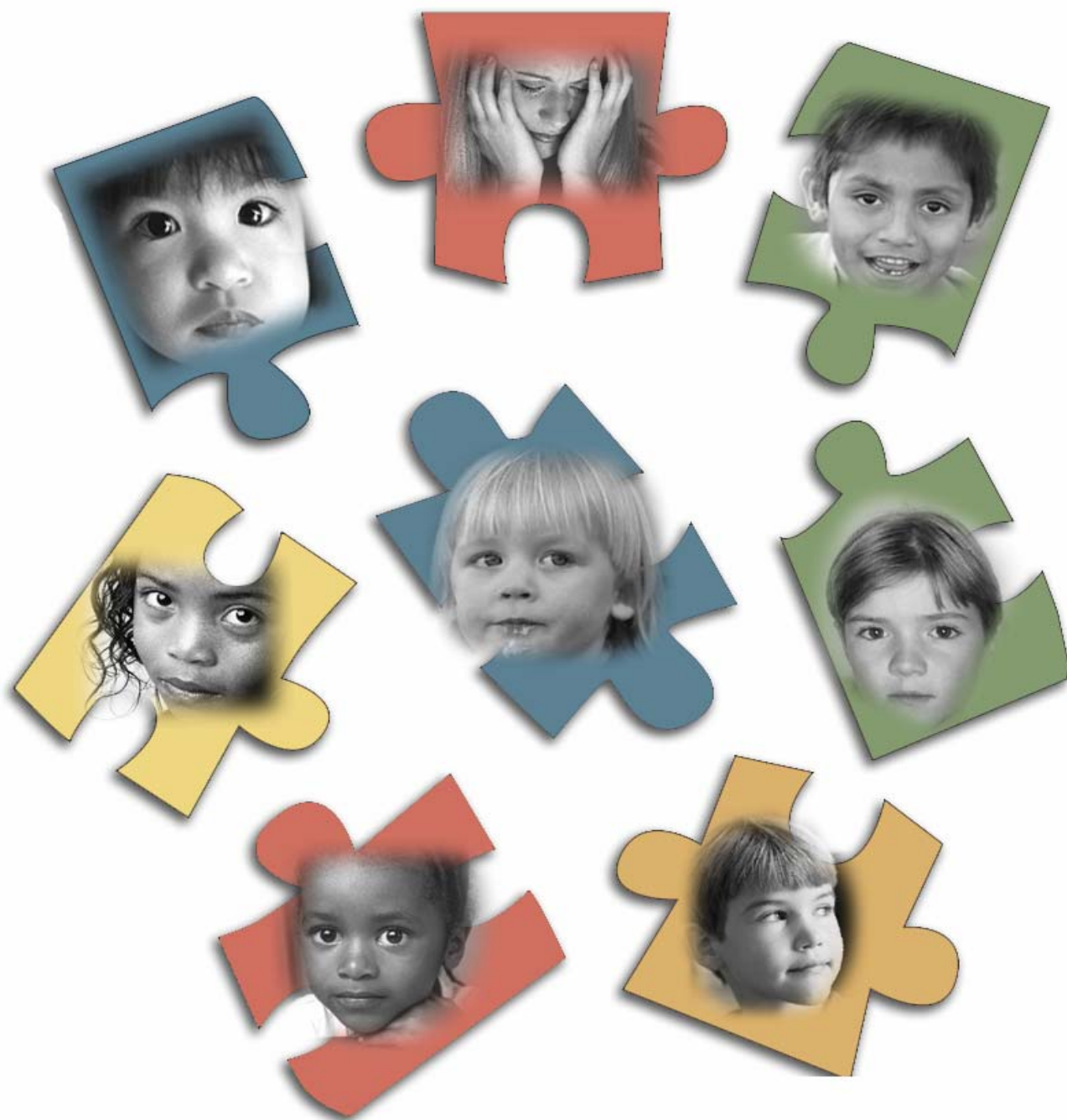


*Michigan Supreme Court
State Court Administrative Office*

Michigan Foster Care Review Board 2006 ANNUAL REPORT





Michigan Supreme Court


State Court Administrative Office
Michigan Hall of Justice
P.O. Box 30052
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Phone (517) 373-0128

Carl L. Gromek, Chief of Staff
State Court Administrator

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 11, 2007

TO: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm
Members of the Michigan Legislature

FROM: Carl L. Gromek 

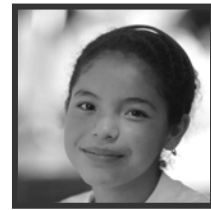
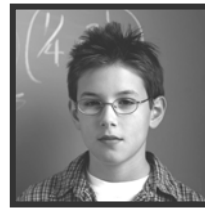
RE: 2006 Foster Care Review Board Annual Report

It is our pleasure to present the Foster Care Review Board Annual Report for 2006. This report, written pursuant to 1997 PA 170, § 9, provides an overview of the activities and functions of the review board during this past year. Included you will find data, trends, and observations gleaned from over 1,200 reviews of children in foster care in 2006. These reviews are conducted by approximately 200 dedicated and well-trained citizen volunteers and provide an objective third-party evaluation of the state foster care system and the effectiveness of care provided to our abused and neglected children.

This report identifies significant challenges which remain to ensuring safe and timely permanency for children in our foster care system, as well as recommendations for successfully addressing these challenges. It is our hope that you find this information to be of significant value as we work together to establish and maintain an efficient and responsive child protection system that ensures every child in our state the best possible future.

Please feel free to contact our Foster Care Review Board or Family Services Division staff at (313) 972-3288 with any questions you may have regarding this report.

/jn



FCRB MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Foster Care Review Board is to utilize citizen volunteers to review and evaluate permanency planning processes and outcomes for children and families in the Michigan foster care system. Based on the data collected through case review, the Foster Care Review Board advocates for systemic improvements in areas of child safety, timely permanency, and family and child well-being.

FCRB VISION STATEMENT

The Foster Care Review Board will be viewed and valued by the courts, the Department of Human Services, private child-placing agencies, the Legislature, and the citizens of Michigan as a major source of credible data on the performance of the child welfare system. Additionally, citizens of the state will use the data to shape public policy and promote awareness regarding the child foster care system.

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the 2006 Annual Report of Michigan's Foster Care Review Board.

The Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) provides third-party review of cases in the state child foster care system. Established by the Michigan Legislature in 1984 Public Act 422, and subsequently amended by 1986 Public Act 159, 1989 Public Act 74, and 1997 Public Act 170, the FCRB helps ensure that children are safe and well-cared-for while in the state foster care system, and that their cases are being moved toward permanency in a timely and efficient manner. This is accomplished by randomly reviewing individual cases within each county, and then making recommendations to the Family Division of the Circuit Court, to local offices of the Department of Human Services (DHS), and to contracted agencies.

Citizen review is a cost-efficient, effective means of providing the courts, DHS, and other interested parties with an objective perspective on the case management process, as well as serving to identify systemic barriers to permanency and child well-being. The FCRB is comprised of approximately 200 citizen volunteers who are recruited, screened, and then trained on key aspects of the child welfare and foster care system, including court policy and rules, federal funding requirements, DHS policy, and state statutes regarding child protection.

This annual report is our opportunity to detail the efforts of the FCRB and share with Michigan's policymakers some of the systemic issues that citizen volunteers have identified as they review foster care cases from throughout the state.

In 2006, the foster care system was challenged by tragic deaths and incidents of serious child abuse, as well as by a federal lawsuit alleging that the DHS failed to adequately care for and protect children. Previous FCRB annual reports have cited numerous weaknesses in the system and areas of concern, several of which could have contributed to these events.

Although our findings and recommendations in the past have been primarily related to case management and court processes, we endeavor this year to focus on what appears to be an overburdened and under funded child protection system. This system has become a troubled mechanism with unresolved workforce issues (large caseloads and high worker turnover) that limits accountability for timely permanency and may compromise the care and safety of children in the system.

For children unfortunate enough to have to come into foster care, the experience is a traumatic and life-changing event. How well our system functions in protecting and providing necessary services for that child can reduce or remediate the impact of this trauma, and will determine if the intervention itself will ultimately be a benefit or a barrier to that child's future well being.

We hope that Michigan's leaders and officials will carefully consider and act upon the information, observations, and recommendations in this year's report, for they are ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of the children served by our state foster care system.

County Comparisons – 1/1/06 to 12/31/06

County	Number of Reviews	Number of Children	Number of Cases	County	Number of Reviews	Number of Children	Number of Cases
Alcona	0	0	0	Lake	5	13	5
Alger	0	0	0	Lapeer	8	7	6
Allegan	13	27	11	Leelanau	0	0	0
Alpena	1	3	1	Lenawee	13	24	11
Antrim	4	10	4	Livingston	7	15	5
Arenac	3	6	3	Luce	4	6	4
Baraga	6	12	4	Mackinac	1	1	1
Barry	3	7	3	Macomb	37	84	25
Bay	10	23	10	Manistee	1	1	1
Benzie	1	2	1	Marquette	17	32	14
Bernier	29	70	20	Mason	4	7	2
Branch	9	17	9	Meosota	9	18	8
Calhoun	24	47	24	Menominee	2	7	2
Cass	9	23	7	Midland	11	29	9
Charlevoix	1	1	1	Missaukee	3	9	2
Cheboygan	8	18	6	Monroe	10	20	6
Chippewa	4	8	4	Montcalm	2	3	2
Clare	8	18	6	Montmorency	1	2	1
Clinton	8	20	6	Muskegon	41	90	29
Crawford	4	12	3	Newaygo	6	15	6
Delta	3	10	3	Oakland	34	85	24
Dickinson	2	3	2	Oceana	3	6	3
Eaton	6	9	6	Ogemaw	3	3	3
Emmet	3	8	2	Ontonagon	0	0	0
Genesee	40	90	34	Osceola	2	2	2
Gladwin	0	0	0	Oscoda	0	0	0
Gogebic	3	6	3	Otsego	3	5	3
Grand Traverse	2	8	2	Ottawa	15	36	14
Gratiot	3	11	2	Presque Isle	1	1	1
Hillsdale	5	11	5	Roscommon	4	9	4
Houghton	3	8	2	Saginaw	27	65	19
Huron	3	10	2	St. Clair	23	44	19
Ingham	31	66	26	St. Joseph	8	13	6
Ionia	0	0	0	Sanilac	5	18	3
Iosco	0	0	0	Schoolcraft	1	1	1
Iron	4	14	2	Shiawassee	8	14	5
Isabella	8	21	7	Tuscola	6	20	4
Jackson	18	43	13	Van Buren	13	23	11
Kalamazoo	38	84	32	Washtenaw	20	38	14
Kalkaska	4	15	3	Wayne	712**	1021**	658**
Kent	44	93	33	Wexford	5	11	4
Keweenaw	0	0	0				

Total Number of Reviews	1438	Total Number of Cases	1239
Total Number of Children	2641		

** The Wayne County boards reviewed a total of 483 Department of Human Services (DHS) files, for children determined by DHS to be eligible for Title IV-E funding in Wayne County. Specifically, the boards reviewed court orders and related documentation in each file to assess the order's conformity to federal eligibility requirements for IV-E funding.

Number of children closed for review in 2006 who achieved the following permanency goal or discharge status:	#	Average Number Of Days in Care
Placement with Parent(s)	276	554.1
Permanent Relative Placement	14	1005.5
Adoption	383	684.1
Legal Guardianship	13	553.4
Long Term Foster Care	10	543
Custodial Care	34	1073.5
Adjudicated Delinquent	2	741
Became Tribal Ward	2	301
AWOL	8	794.6
Other	1	3621
APPLA- Another Permanency Planned Living Arrangement		
Permanent Foster Family Agreement	17	955.7
Independent Living	8	771.8
Emancipation	20	1229.3

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

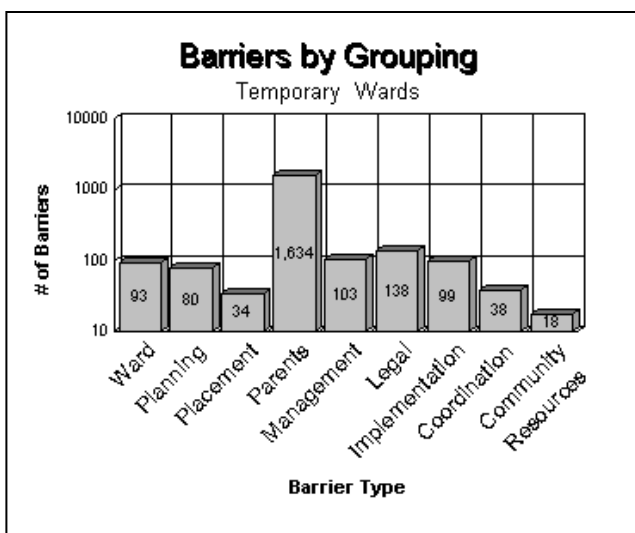
Temporary Court Wards

The primary focus of individual case review is to identify specific issues that may compromise child safety and well-being, or delay permanency for these children, and then to recommend immediate remedies to those issues.

Data is collected to identify common barriers to permanency and systemic issues related to these barriers. Recommendations and strategies to address these issues are presented in this report.

Top Five Barriers to Permanency Temporary Court Wards

1.	Parental Substance Abuse Problems
2.	Lack of insight into problems
3.	Non-compliance with Parent/Agency Agreement
4.	Inadequate/Inappropriate Housing
5.	Low Functioning (Limited Abilities, Lack of Coping Skill)



Related Systemic Issue: Challenges to Effective Casework

One of the functions of the Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) is to provide an objective assessment of the care and services provided to children and families in our state foster care system. The foster care caseworker is central to this care. Board members review the caseworker's written documentation in the case file, and also interview the caseworker regarding his or her efforts to ensure safe and timely permanency for the children in each case.

Caseworkers face multiple challenging responsibilities and play a myriad of roles in the course of intervening in the lives of children and their families. The primary responsibilities of the foster care caseworker include: ensuring the safety and well-being of the children in placement; providing support, encouragement, and referrals for services to the children's parents; and monitoring the progress and continuing needs of the family.

In each case, the caseworker must devote significant time to building rapport and establishing supportive, trusting relationships with the children, parents, and foster parents. These relationships are essential to effective casework, ultimately helping to ensure that children are safe and well-cared-for and that the permanency plan is progressing in a timely manner.

The caseworker must give sufficient time to the parents to accurately assess their needs and progress, while also supporting them through personal crises and helping them navigate through a complex and sometimes unforgiving foster care system. The caseworker must regularly spend time observing and assessing the children, both in the foster home and when interacting with their parents. The caseworker must devote time to securing information from teachers and therapists. Finally, the caseworker must allot time to the foster parents to ensure that they have the necessary information and support to safely and successfully care for children with extreme special needs. The time spent on this function is necessary to help maintain placement stability.

Caseworkers report that they spend substantial time communicating and collaborating with multidisciplinary service providers to ensure that children and families have been properly assessed and are receiving and benefiting from service referrals.

In order to satisfy state guidelines and federal funding requirements, caseworkers are required to maintain substantial written documentation regarding their activities and the progress of the case. This requirement alone is extremely time-consuming.

Caseworkers are key participants in the court process. They provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding the children's safety and well-being, report on parental needs and progress, and make recommendations to the court regarding permanency for the children. These recommendations can be considered credible only if the caseworker has had ample time to diligently evaluate the needs and progress of the children and parents, and research realistic permanency alternatives if the children cannot be safely reunited with their parents.

Although manageable caseloads are essential, caseworkers must also have the professional education, experience, supervision, and support necessary to engage multiple disciplines and agencies in planning and collaboration to ensure child well-being and timely permanency.

It appears to the FCRB that Michigan does not have an adequate workforce of trained and experienced foster care workers to fulfill the above responsibilities in a manner that can ensure safe and timely permanency for all children in our foster care system. This inadequacy appears to be a substantial factor in the abuse and death of children in the foster care system during the past year, as well as a significant factor in the allegations made against our foster care system in the recent federal class action lawsuit.

The FCRB has identified the following problematic workforce issues:

- 1) High-volume caseloads, exacerbated by caseworker turnover, stress-related medical leaves, and the inability of agencies to control workload and case intake.
- 2) A high volume of caseworker turnover, which disrupts the vital relational trust between the worker and other key parties in the case, including the court. This can compromise child safety and well-being and delay the permanency process.

Factors that contribute to the high volume of caseworker turnover include:

- High-volume caseloads;
- High levels of emotional exhaustion and low levels of job satisfaction;
- Inadequate supervision (workers state that they receive little direct supervision)

that is consultative and supportive);

- Lack of resources to help clients;
- Disrespectful treatment by judges and legal professionals;
- Negative perceptions of the profession;
- Grossly inadequate compensation.

- 3) The educational training and experience level of many new workers does not appear to match the responsibilities and demands placed on workers at the entry level. The Department of Human Services (DHS) reportedly does not require new caseworkers to have a degree in social work. Although DHS provides an eight-week training program to familiarize new workers with agency policy, court processes, and community resources, it appears to the FCRB that new workers lack the high level of knowledge, expertise, and maturity necessary to fulfill their vital responsibilities in facilitating safe and timely permanency for children in the foster care system.

While DHS appears to be able to maintain a small core of experienced and highly competent workers, private agencies seem to have a more difficult time maintaining staff stability. Many skilled and experienced workers in private agencies either strive to move to DHS due to significant wage disparities or they look for supervisory opportunities that pay more and offer manageable workloads. Thus, private agencies are more likely to have inexperienced or ineffectual staff in casework positions.

Many of the systemic deficiencies cited in the federal class action lawsuit would likely be remedied by a willingness to invest sufficient public resources in children, families, and those who work with them. It is ultimately the responsibility of our state Legislature, through its budgetary and oversight roles, to ensure caseworkers have sufficient time and resources to protect children and empower vulnerable families. As appropriator of funds for our state foster care system, the Legislature would appear to have de facto control of caseload, a significant contributing factor to the safety and well-being of children in foster care.

Related Recommendations

- 1) We recommend that the state Legislature ensure sufficient funding for DHS to provide casework services that secure the safety and well-being of all children in the state foster care system. This would include assurances of funding for salaries that would attract and retain a competent and committed workforce.
- 2) We recommend that DHS establish uniform procedures and policies for frequency and content of supervision of foster care caseworkers, and that persons placed in supervisory positions have the necessary experience, training, and disposition to provide effective supervision.
- 3) We recommend that the Legislature and DHS collaborate with state colleges and universities that offer social work degrees to establish a curriculum that prepares students for employment in child welfare and empowers them to successfully manage the demands of an entry-level position.

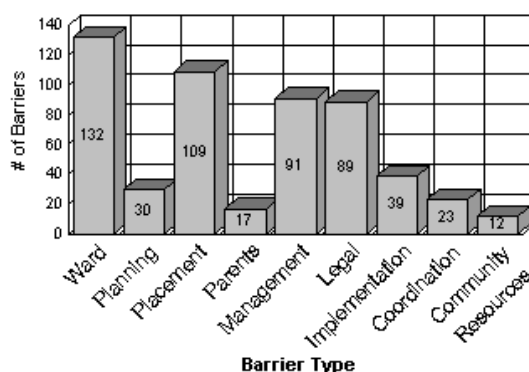
- 4) We recommend that the Department of Human Services and its contracted agencies establish minimum qualifications to use in hiring foster care workers, which would ensure caseworkers have the education and/or comparable experience to successfully handle the responsibilities and demands placed on them in managing a foster care caseload.

Top Five Barriers to Permanency Permanent Court Wards

1.	Ward Behavior
2.	Lack of Appropriate Adoptive Homes
3.	Appeal of Termination Pending
4.	Guardian Ad Litem Not Taking Active Role in Case
5.	Lack of Documentation in Case Record

Barriers by Grouping

Permanent Wards



Related Systemic Issue 1: Permanency Planning and Adoption

The Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) remains concerned about the number of children available for adoption for whom the process is taking an inordinate length of time to complete, and the number of children with the goal of adoption who do not achieve permanency prior to “aging out” of the foster care system.

In Michigan, there were approximately 6,300 state wards (dependent children whose parental rights had been terminated) in 2006, according to the Children’s Services Administration, Adoption Services. Nearly 4,600 had a permanency goal of adoption, and 2,600 were subsequently adopted. Interestingly, the number of state wards has almost doubled over the past 10 years, while the number of children adopted has remained consistent.

Despite significant recruitment efforts, incentives, and initiatives to find adoptive families for these children, the availability of caregivers for children with special needs remains limited. The number of children needing a permanent home and family will certainly remain larger than the pool of adoptive families if we continue to terminate parental rights at the rate we presently do.

A statewide workgroup, convened by Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan, is presently reviewing many of these issues with the intention of providing recommendations for statutory reform to the Legislature in the coming year.

Related Recommendations

- 1) The primary goal of a court in terminating parental rights is, in most cases, to free the child for adoption. Therefore, a thorough evaluation of a child's likelihood to be adopted within a reasonable timeframe subsequent to termination should precede a final order to terminate parental rights. We recommend that the State Court Administrative Office work with the Legislature to consider legislation that would give courts discretion to delay an order terminating parental rights until an appropriate adoptive home has been established.
- 2) We recommend that the Michigan Legislature provide funding to match federal dollars to provide necessary resources to the Department of Human Services so that it can offer subsidized guardianship as a permanency plan for youth over 12 years old whose parental rights are terminated, but who are unlikely to be adopted.
- 3) "Concurrent planning" is a process of working toward family reunification, while at the same time developing an alternative permanency plan if reunification ultimately is not possible. It helps ensure children do not linger in foster care any longer than necessary or become "legal orphans." The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-89) mandates shortened timelines for achieving permanency for children in foster care. To meet these timelines, most states have come to rely on concurrent planning. Information provided by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which reviews the state's timeliness in achieving permanency, indicates that child welfare agencies around the nation are showing positive results in their concurrent planning programs, and are generating data showing the effectiveness of concurrent planning methods. We recommend that the Michigan Department of Human Services adopt concurrent planning as an approved policy to help decrease the length of time children are in foster care in Michigan.

* * *

Related Systemic Issue II: Representation of Children by Court-Appointed Lawyer-Guardians ad Litem

MCL 712A.17d prescribes the powers and duties of the court-appointed attorney for a child in abuse/neglect proceedings, and refers to this person in statute as the "lawyer-guardian ad litem." The lawyer-guardian ad litem (L-GAL) is charged with ensuring that his or her child clients receive appropriate and necessary services while under the court's jurisdiction, including services necessary to secure their safety and well-being.

MCL 712A.17 (d) requires that before each proceeding or hearing, the L-GAL shall "meet with or observe the child [and] assess the child's needs and wishes with regard to the representation and the issues in the case..." monitor the implementation of case plans and court orders, conduct an investigation of the facts of the case so as to make a determination regarding the child's best interests, and advocate for those

best interests before the court. The intent of the statute in requiring these activities by the L-GAL is to ensure that the child has a voice and meaningful representation in the proceedings, as well as provide the court with informed testimony that is fully focused on the child's needs and best interests regarding permanency.

Since the implementation of this statute in 1999, the review board has expressed significant concern regarding practice fidelity by attorneys appointed by the court to fulfill these responsibilities. The board also noted concern regarding the court's willingness to hold appointed attorneys accountable to these responsibilities. These concerns have been noted in previous annual reports, as well as directly communicated to the State Court Administrative Office and Michigan Supreme Court.

In response to concerns noted by the review board and other child advocates, the Supreme Court convened a workgroup in 2003 which concluded that L-GALs often failed to meet with their child clients, as statute requires, and were not always familiar with the circumstances of the case. As a result, children were not properly represented in the proceedings. These conclusions led the State Court Administrative Office to establish a form entitled, "Affidavit of Services Performed by the Lawyer-Guardian Ad litem," which is a formal statement signed by the L-GAL attesting to the fact that he or she has performed his or her statutory duties.

Beginning in January 2004, local courts were to require that the affidavit be completed as a condition of payment for legal services. In March 2004, Michigan Court Rule 3.915 was amended to require local courts to inquire, on the record, whether the L-GAL had met with his or her child clients as required by statute. Subsequently, court order forms were amended to include a statement indicating whether the court found the L-GAL had complied with the requirements of MCL 712A.19d.

Despite these added measures, the review board remains significantly concerned about the quality of representation children in foster care receive. It has been difficult to obtain compliance data from L-GALs assigned to cases we review, as only about 25 percent attend the FCRB reviews or submit a related standard questionnaire. Information from caseworkers, foster parents, and the children themselves, as well as observations made by board members who attend statutory hearings, indicate there are many L-GALs who still do not fulfill their statutory responsibilities.

These caseworkers and foster parents who attend court hearings have advised the FCRB that the jurist does not always inquire, on the record, whether the L-GAL has fulfilled his or her statutory duties. In some cases, the court order indicates the L-GAL has complied with statutory requirements, while the children themselves and/or the foster parents have advised that they were never contacted by the L-GAL.

Attorneys who represent children have also conveyed to the FCRB that, in some counties, the court does not require a signed Affidavit of Services Performed by the L-GAL as a condition of payment. This would seem to undermine the Legislature's and the Supreme Court's intent to ensure that L-GALs actually communicate with their child clients and are familiar with the circumstances of the case.

Furthermore, staff and review board members who have observed L-GAL representation during statutory hearings find that the L-GAL often appears to have neither a good understanding of the circumstances of the case nor an adequate grasp of the social and clinical issues presented, and subsequently fails to ask the right questions or make informed recommendations. The board is especially concerned about the fact that these attorneys are not required to have any specialized training or experience to be appointed to such

complex cases, the outcomes of which will have life-long implications for children represented by this profession.

The following two issues were consistently identified by attorneys and judges as significant barriers to L-GAL compliance with MCL 712A.19d:

- Inadequate financial compensation to attract and retain qualified attorneys to these appointments.
- High volume caseloads (mostly in large urban counties) that limit the time the attorney has to comply with statutory requirements.

Related Recommendations

- 1) **We recommend that the State Court Administrative Office work with the State Bar of Michigan to develop best-practice strategies to help ensure children receive quality representation by their court-appointed L-GAL.**
- 2) **We recommend that the State Court Administrative Office monitor local court compliance with MCR 3.915(B)(2)(a) that requires the court to inquire, on the record, whether L-GALs have met with their child clients as required by statute, as well as compliance with the requirement that L-GALs complete and sign the “Affidavit of Services Performed by the Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem.”**
- 3) **We recommend that the Michigan Legislature initiate a compensation study in collaboration with the Michigan Association of Counties and the State Bar of Michigan to establish what would be fair compensation for attorneys representing children in abuse and neglect cases, and how those costs should be met. We further recommend that the Legislature and counties establish a range of compensation commensurate with duties required by MCL 712A.17d, which we hope will increase the pool of attorneys interested in this work, and reduce caseloads in larger counties.**
- 4) **If adequate compensation levels cannot be established statewide for L-GALs, we recommend that the Legislature consider establishing a system to allow for non-attorney, court-appointed guardian ad litem. Other states have implemented this idea, which has proven to be a low cost, effective means of representing and advocating for children.**
- 5) **We recommend that the State Court Administrative Office establish mandatory training and/or experience guidelines attorneys must meet to be appointed as L-GALs for children in abuse and neglect proceedings.**

FOSTER PARENT APPEALS

1997 PA 163 was established to help promote placement stability and to provide foster parents formal recourse when they do not believe that a proposed removal of the foster child from their home is in the child's best interest. The resulting statute, MCL 712A.13b, allows foster parents and relatives who have children placed with them to appeal to their local Foster Care Review Board, which then hears the appeal and makes recommendations to the placing agency, the court, and the Michigan Children's Institute (MCI) superintendent. These recommendations are directed at the appropriateness of the move as it relates to the child's safety and well being. When the local review board investigates and agrees that a placement move is not in the child's best interests, the board's findings and recommendations are forwarded to the court or to the MCI superintendent, depending on the child's legal status, for final placement disposition.

There were a total of 152 appeal inquiries to the Foster Care Review Board Program from foster parents in 2006, of which 92 resulted in review board investigations. The remaining calls did not result in actual investigations, because they either did not meet eligibility standards for an appeal, the foster parent withdrew their appeal, or the agency and foster parent reached an agreement regarding the child's placement prior to investigation. Of the 92 actual appeal investigations, review boards supported the foster parents 43 times (47 percent) and the placement agencies 49 times (53 percent).

2006 Foster Parent Appeal Outcomes

	Board Supported the Foster Parents ¹	Board Supported the Agency
Appeals-Department of Human Services Cases	27	31
Appeals-Purchase of Service Agencies Cases	16	18
Totals	43	49

Of the 18 court ward reviews where boards supported foster parents, the courts upheld the board's decision 10 times and supported the agency 8 times. In the 26 subsequent reviews by the MCI superintendent, the board's decision was upheld 8 times and the agency decisions were supported 18 times. One case was not reviewed by either the court or MCI Superintendent because the foster parents and the agency were able to reach an agreement after the FCRB appeal. Two appeals had children with shared jurisdiction between the courts and the MCI Superintendent.

Final Outcomes of Appeals Where Board Supported the Foster Parents

Court Supported		MCI Supported	
Foster Parent	Agency	Foster Parent	Agency
11	8	8	17

Related Observations and Analysis

Foster parent appeal inquiries increased 22 percent, and actual board investigations increased 15 percent in 2006, following two consecutive years of decreasing numbers. These increases are despite a greater number of counties providing Family-to-Family services and requiring Team Decision Meetings (TDM) prior to the replacement of children. It is difficult to determine specific reasons for the appeal increases, although the FCRB has heard from many foster parents who felt they were not given adequate information, preparation, or agency support to meet the special needs of the children placed with them. Children in foster care today continue to manifest uniquely difficult and disruptive behaviors. The Foster Care Review Board encourages foster care agencies to be proactive in providing foster parents with child-specific training and support from the start to ensure the long-term stability and success of the placement.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that the Office of Child and Adult Licensing within the Department of Human Services require, as part of the licensing and training of new foster parents, that all foster parents are informed of local and state support groups, such as the *Michigan Association of Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Parents*, and other ancillary services available to support and help foster parents in their care of the individual needs of each child in their home.
2. We recommend that the Department of Human Services establish a protocol for caseworker visits with foster parents that requires documentation of the content of the visit, including the foster parent's requests for support, training, and information, and the agency's response to those requests.

FCRB Annual Reports, including individual data pertaining to the activities of all local boards, can be reviewed at the Foster Care Review Board website:

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao//services/fcrb/fcrb.htm>

BIANNUAL PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT GOALS: 2005-2007

The Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) established the following biannual goals for 2005 through 2007 at the 2005 Annual Training as part of a continuing effort to ensure statutory compliance and meet legislative intent, maximize utilization of our available resources, and support and benefit system stakeholders:

- 1. Integrate into our review process findings which would benefit the court and the Department of Human Services (DHS) in monitoring their compliance with federal funding requirements related to the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and to Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.**

Progress: Findings and recommendations were revised in March 2006 to monitor key elements of both ASFA and Title IV-E federal funding requirements. Presently, we provide quarterly reports to DHS regarding their compliance with the state program improvement plan for the Child and Family Services Review in the areas of placement stability, foster parent participation, and L-GAL compliance.

- 2. Establish an annual forum for presentation of the FCRB annual report to the state legislature. The forum would include foster care system advocates and professionals to present and support system and/or resource findings and recommendations from our report.**

Progress: The legislative subcommittee is addressing this and has thus far recommended that small groups meet with state House and Senate subcommittees (those that focus on the needs of children and families) in order to present the annual report. The committee has also recommended local town meetings with legislators to help educate the community on the needs of children in foster care.

- 3. Establish a system for tracking and documenting instances where the board's review of an individual case contributed directly to the resolution of child safety and well-being issues and/or the removal of barriers to permanency.**

Progress: This has yet to be addressed.

- 4. Establish an award or means of recognition for outstanding work being done by professionals in the foster care system.**

Progress: Criteria and protocol for selection of caseworkers and children's court-appointed lawyer-guardians ad litem are in process of development. The tentative target for the first award presentation is November 2007.

- 5. Reestablish a quarterly newsletter that brings focus to critical systemic issues and provides professionals and advocates in the foster care system with a forum for communication of information that will help improve professional practice.**

Progress: A newsletter was reestablished in April 2006 entitled *The Permanency Planner*.

- 6. Increase advocacy by citizen volunteers with state legislators by establishing an online ListServ to inform board members of pending legislation related to foster care.**

Progress: A ListServ is not available through SCAO in a manageable format. The program will use e-mail groups instead. The protocol for monitoring and communication of pending legislation is in development.

- 7. Establish an ongoing relationship with one or more of our state universities to help facilitate the education of students pursuing degrees related to child welfare, including provision of field placements.**

Progress: We have had preliminary discussions with Wayne State University. The FCRB will have a blended internship beginning fall 2007 with Spaulding for Children.

- 8. Increase the ability and effectiveness of the FCRB Statewide Advisory Committee to monitor, identify, and address critical systemic issues which delay permanency for children and compromise child safety and well-being.**

Progress: A subcommittee process was established in September 2006 to identify and make recommendations to address critical systemic issues in the foster care system.

- 9. Reestablish an introductory training about the Foster Care Review Board Program as part of the DHS Child Welfare Institute (CWI) as a means of ensuring that new caseworkers are knowledgeable about the program and are able to use foster care review to support their management of foster care cases.**

Progress: An FCRB overview presentation was reestablished as part of the CWI curriculum in August 2006. Its focus is to assist new caseworkers in preparing for foster care reviews and foster parent appeals, and to help them utilize foster care review to bring about safe and timely permanency for children from their caseloads.

- 10. Continue to work with the Department of Human Services to establish a system of transfer of case information that ensures the Foster Care Review Board receives necessary case materials to conduct reviews in a manner that fulfills our statutory mandate, which results in useful/beneficial recommendations to the local court and foster care agency and provides accurate data to support our annual report recommendations.**

Progress: A meeting with Wayne County DHS Program Director and staff in November 2006 and a formal letter to DHS Director of Field Operations in Lansing have not produced the desired results to date. DHS is in the process of putting statutory requirements into policy.

Michigan Foster Care Review Board

2006 Annual Report

The Foster Care Review Board is comprised of citizen volunteers from all Michigan counties and all walks of life, who meet once a month to review cases of abused and/or neglected children in foster care.

MICHIGAN FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

County	Name	County	Name
Alcona	Tamara Quick	Ingham	Michael Kessler
Allegan	Chris Seidel	Ingham	Selena Langston
Allegan	Vivien Vandenberg	Ingham	Kristina Marshall
Antrim	Suzanne Manturuk	Ingham	Cheryl Mask-Nealy
Bay	David Dunn	Ingham	Susan Sharkey
Berrien	Steven Sowder	Ingham	Stephanie Smith
Berrien	Mary Wood	Ingham	Kimber Thompson
Branch	Cathy Gordon	Ingham	Arnetta Tyus
Branch	Michael Ronzone	Ionia	Frederick Puffenberger
Branch	Lucinda Wakeman	Isabella	Karen Kerr
Branch	Jerry Yoder	Jackson	Jonathan Hale
Cass	Diana Grabemeyer	Jackson	William White, Jr.
Cass	James Rutten	Kalamazoo	Audrey Minor
Charlevoix	Mary Lee Campbell	Kalamazoo	T. Jefferson Murphy
Cheboygan	Stephen Begle	Kalamazoo	Sally Putney
Clare	Angela Chicilli	Kalamazoo	Helayne Smith
Clare	Kathryn Mitchell	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Clinton	Norma Kueppers	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Delta	Brenda Kinsey	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Eaton	Carol Little	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Genesee	Marilyn Hoffman	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Genesee	Ann Marie Kenderski	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Genesee	Kimberly Mears	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Genesee	Karen Simon	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Genesee	Deborah Tillman	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Genesee	Mel Tormey	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Genesee	Stephanie Young	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Grand Traverse	Mary Lou Bonacci	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Grand Traverse	Michael Herron	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Hillsdale	Martha Crow	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Hillsdale	Ronald Hayes	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Huron	Brenda Battle	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Huron	Janice Holz	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Huron	Charles Roberts	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Huron	Richard Streif, Jr.	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Ingham	Mary Lou Blanchard	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Ingham	Fonda Brewer-Williams	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Ingham	Kristen Capps	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Ingham	Edwina Divins	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp
Ingham	Cinda Eltzroth	Kalamazoo	Shirley Topp

MICHIGAN FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

County	Name	County	Name
Menominee	Diane Larsen	St. Clair	Kathryn Bruer
Menominee	Kathleen Philipps	St. Clair	Robert Goldenbogen
Midland	Diane Bedford	St. Clair	Michele Vilas
Midland	Stephen Ignatowski	St. Joseph	Robyn Emde
Monroe	Frederick Corser, Jr.	St. Joseph	Kenneth Orlich
Muskegon	Brenda Atkinson	St. Joseph	Marlene Roberts
Muskegon	Donna Fiebelkorn	Tuscola	Gary Holik
Muskegon	Evelyn Geile	Tuscola	Cristi Smith
Muskegon	Patricia Hanson	Van Buren	Dean Beekwith
Muskegon	Edward Holovka	Van Buren	Jennifer Carpio
Muskegon	Ruqaiyah Rogers	Washtenaw	Rose Marie Barhydt
Muskegon	Norman Swier	Washtenaw	Marion Hoey
Muskegon	Meiba White Newsome	Washtenaw	Henry Johnson
Newaygo	Larry Feikema	Washtenaw	Lisa Ruby
Oakland	Barbara Allen	Washtenaw	Gayle Stewart
Oakland	Carol Borich	Wayne	Brooke Adams
Oakland	Cassandra Chandler	Wayne	Derrick Anderson
Oakland	Charles Ludwig	Wayne	Marsialle Arbuckle
Oakland	Eleanor Mickens	Wayne	Charlene Batchelor
Oakland	Darrita Stein	Wayne	Lillian Bernstein
Oakland	Judith Stephens	Wayne	Ben Biddle
Osoda	Gerald Corey	Wayne	John Bishop
Otsego	Vicky Rigney	Wayne	Henry Bohm
Ottawa	James McIlvain	Wayne	Brenda Boyd
Ottawa	Carol Rickey	Wayne	Keenan Brown
Presque Isle	Denise Parrott	Wayne	Willie Cambell Sr.
Presque Isle	Ruth Richard	Wayne	Carol Coccia
Roscommon	Kathryn Bangs	Wayne	Janelle Coklow
Saginaw	Barbara Hill	Wayne	Ida Coleman-Estell
Saginaw	Vivian Keys Brown	Wayne	Ivan Cotman
Saginaw	Regina Nerio	Wayne	Wilhelmina Cotton
Saginaw	Shirley Norman	Wayne	Tonie Dance
Saginaw	Willie Owens	Wayne	Clara Dawkins
Sanilac	Richard Hug	Wayne	Lynda DeFraim
Schoolcraft	Judith Ruttan	Wayne	Doris DeMarco
Shiawassee	Jorja Ackels	Wayne	Marvin Dick
Shiawassee	Jacob Drenovsky	Wayne	Fred Durhal
Shiawassee	Sherry Horcha	Wayne	

MICHIGAN FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

County	Name	County	Name	County	Name
Wayne	George Eason	Wayne	Darryl V. Hunter	Wayne	Michael C. Piper
Wayne	Michael Eberth	Wayne	Rhonda Ifetayo Chaffin	Wayne	Tricia Richardson
Wayne	James Emerson	Wayne	Carlton Jackson	Wayne	James Rogers Sr.
Wayne	Donoella Floyd	Wayne	Yvette Jenkins	Wayne	Marguerita Ross-Price
Wayne	Vicky Gilmore	Wayne	Wendy Johnson	Wayne	Wain Saeger
Wayne	Brenda Godfrey	Wayne	Ethel Knight	Wayne	Janine Sladowski
Wayne	Tina Gomez	Wayne	Angelita Krasson	Wayne	Tracy Smith
Wayne	Remberto Gomez-Baez	Wayne	Mark LaBerge	Wayne	Curtis Smith
Wayne	Romal Griggs	Wayne	Robert Lemanek	Wayne	Willie Stanley
Wayne	Willie Jane Griggs	Wayne	Mary Lemanek	Wayne	Mark Steinhauer
Wayne	Alma Hairston-Tyler	Wayne	Gary Curtis Madden	Wayne	Ellen Stephens
Wayne	Mary Hammons	Wayne	Robert McDonnell	Wayne	Carol Terpak
Wayne	Alice Mae Harris	Wayne	JoAnn McGhee	Wayne	Marsha Thacker
Wayne	Warren Harrison	Wayne	Romona McKinney	Wayne	Sara Tyranski
Wayne	Cathy Ann S. Haynes	Wayne	Jacqueline Moss-Williams	Wayne	Re Esther Watkins
Wayne	Jonas Hill, Sr.	Wayne	Floyd Myers	Wayne	Cassandra Wells
Wayne	Loretta Horton	Wayne	Daphne Nedd	Wayne	Douglas Whitaker
Wayne	Kathie House	Wayne	Elizabeth Oliver	Wayne	Elion-Eloni Wilks
Wayne	David L. Hunt	Wayne	Sue Parker	Wayne	
		Wayne	Granada L. Peterson	Wayne	

The FCRB Advisory Committee is a collaborative body of representatives from each local board, as well as professionals and advocates from the child welfare community. The information, conclusions, and data presented in the Annual Report, along with any related recommendations, are the product of this collaborative effort and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Michigan Supreme Court or the State Court Administrative Office, under whose auspices this program is conducted.

Professional Members of the Statewide Advisory Committee

Michael Anderegg

Chief Judge
Marquette County Probate Court

Terri Henrizi

Training Coordinator and Family
Support Specialist
Assoc. for Children's Mental Health

Kathryne O'Grady

Deputy Director
Adult and Children's Policy
Department of Human Services

Richard Bearup

Executive Director
Children's Trust Fund

Bill Johnson

Superintendent
Michigan Children's Institute

Carolyn Rayford

Program Manager
Lutheran Child & Family Services

Mary Chaliman

Foster Care Program Manager
Dept. of Human Services

Mary Johnson

President
MJ3 Consulting

Verlie Ruffin

Children's Ombudsman
State of Michigan

Amy Hartmann

Attorney at Law
Michigan Children's Law Center

Zoe Lyons

Office of Family Advocate
Dept. of Human Services

Leslie Kim Smith

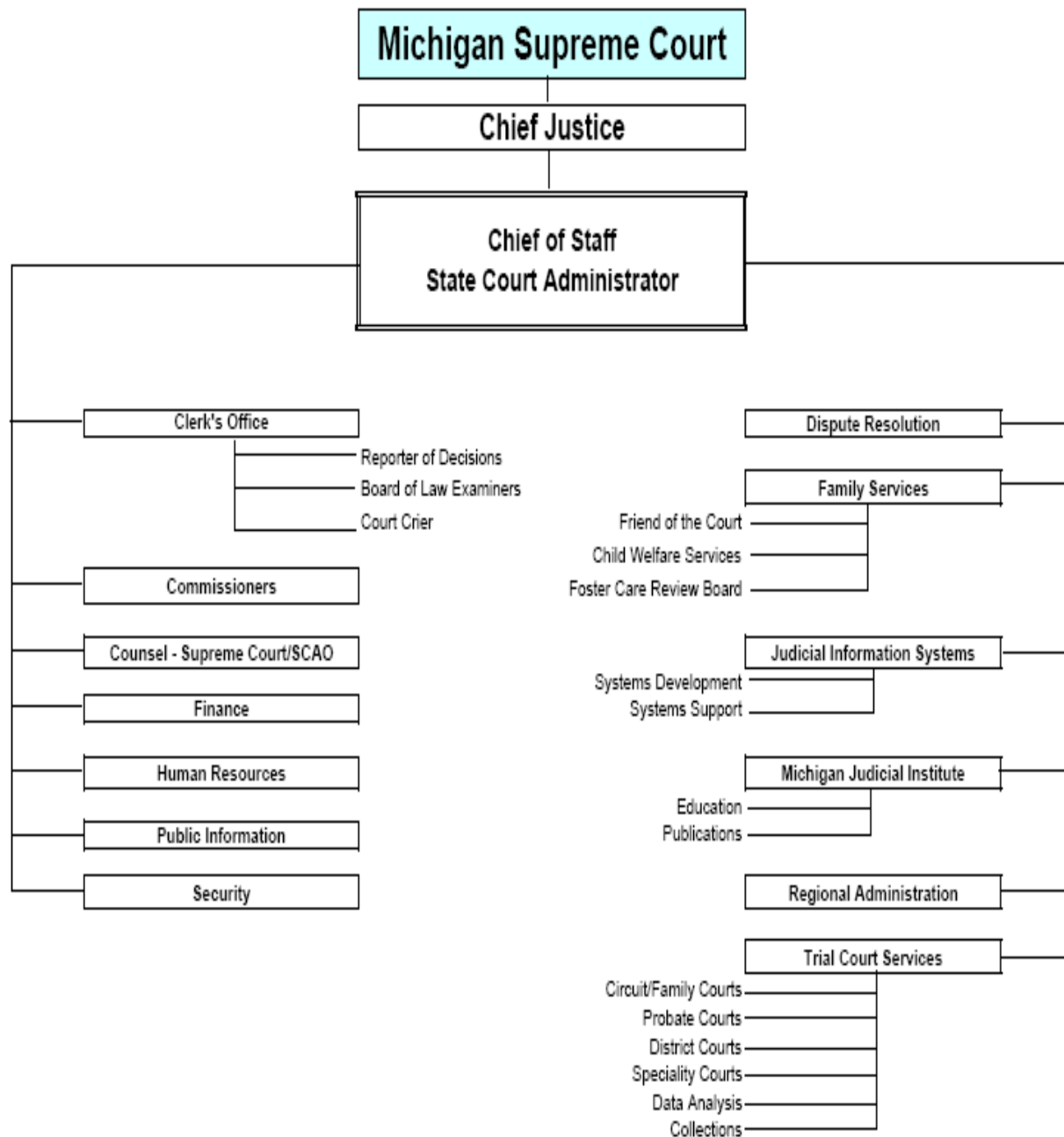
Circuit Judge
3rd Circuit Court, Family Div.

Janet R. Snyder

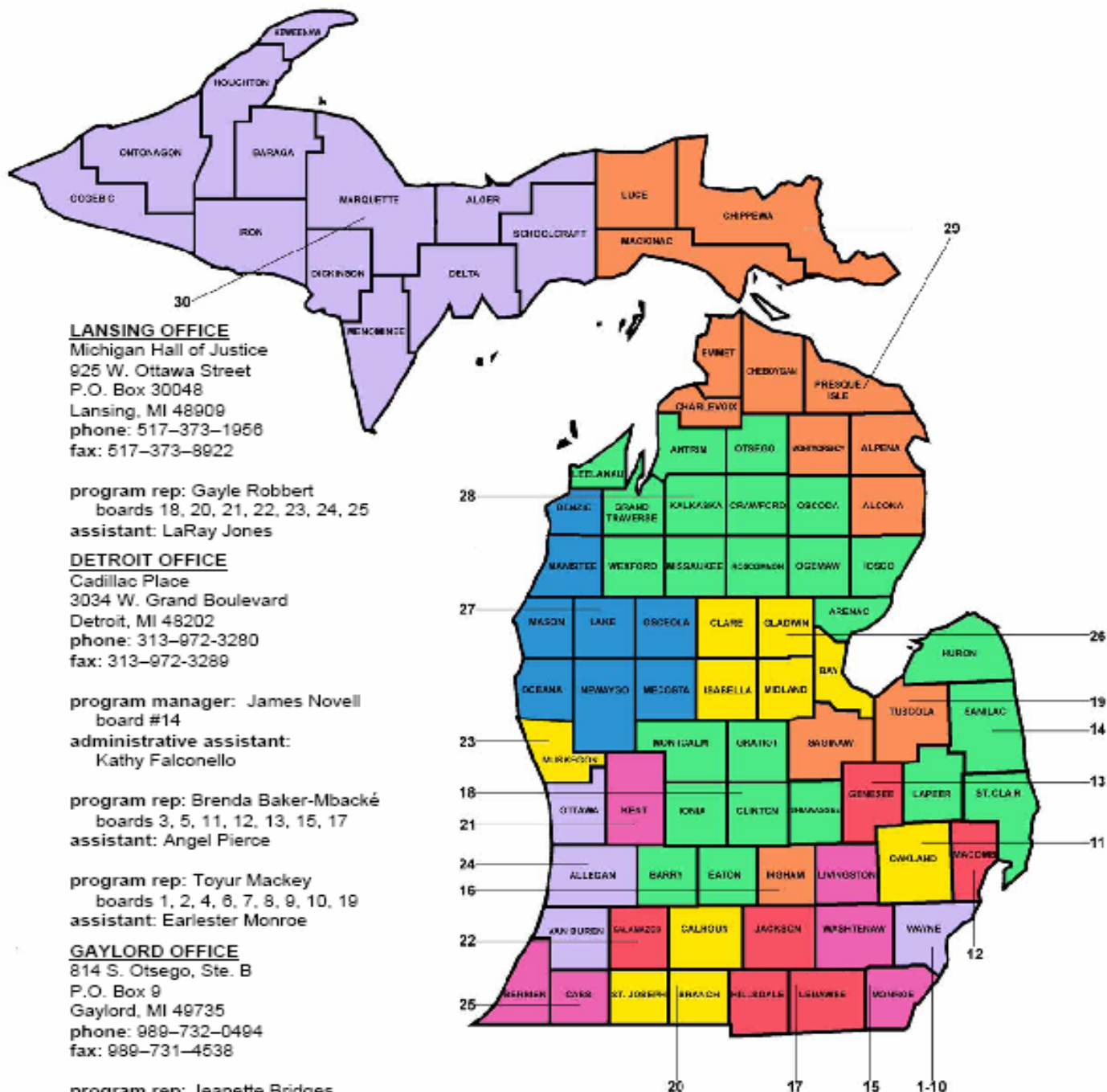
Executive Director
Hear My Voice

Bill Memberto

Director, Family Services



MICHIGAN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARDS



Website: <http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/fcrb/fcrb.htm>

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